

February 10, 1958

Dr. Armin C. Braun
The Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research
66th Street and York Avenue
New York 21, New York

Dear Dr. Braun:

To your letter of February 6: I am a little abashed to have to tell you how little we actually did with *Agrobacterium tumefaciens*. A few casual experiments were done which were not very promising and then for reasons I won't go into here the project was not properly pursued.

To your second question, my assessment of this work has depended in part by my understanding that Klein had quite failed to repeat his experiments in your own laboratory. I have been rather hoping that some more definite statement might be forthcoming from you. I was not at all impressed by the initial publication, especially with regard to the rigor with which surviving bacteria were excluded from the DNA preparations. All in all it has seemed to me a very messy business and I was waiting all this time to hear what the specialists in agrobacterium, like yourself, thought about it.

I will say that I am rather better impressed by the perhaps related studies by Balassa on the transduction of streptomycin resistance in rhizobium. However, here too, I'll have to maintain a reserved reaction until some confirmation is forthcoming.

While we are on the subject, may I take the opportunity to make an earnest request for your more general papers on the biology of the crown-gall phenomenon?

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Medical Genetics

JL/ew